



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-6-55
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 6	Guide Signs – Freeways
SUBJECT 55	Community “Historic Downtown” Signing

A. General

Supplemental guide signs *may* be allowed to direct motorists to certain community historic districts, specifically an “Historic Downtown”, subject to the conditions described in this guideline.

B. Definitions

A ***District*** is a definable geographical area that can be distinguished from surrounding properties by changes such as density, scale, type, age, style of sites, buildings, structures, and objects, or by documented differences in patterns of historic development or associations.

A ***District*** also possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A ***District*** is considered a business district.

C. Eligibility

Communities are eligible for freeway or expressway signs directing motorists to an historic downtown district when that district is entered in the National Register of Historic Places by the Secretary of the Interior and listed in the State Register of Historic Places by the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer. Official documents must be provided to the Department affirming the National and State designations. To be eligible for signs, the area (“Historic Downtown”) within the community must be designated on the National Register under the Category of ***District***. Only Downtown Historic Business Districts may qualify for Historic Downtown signing. Historic residential districts or avenues do not qualify for Historic Downtown signing.

In addition, to be eligible for signs under this guideline, the community must agree to comply with the criteria and requirements of this guideline, and accept responsibility for all costs associated with signing for the historic downtown under this guideline.

D. Sign Requirements, Location, and Installation

The following installation criteria must be met:

1. No “Historic Downtown” sign *may* be erected within any city having a population over 500,000.
2. The freeway or expressway on which the “Historic Downtown” signs are located must:
 - a) be within five miles of the nearest boundary of the community, or
 - b) pass within the corporate limits of the community.
3. Only one “Historic Downtown” sign *may* be installed in each direction of travel on a freeway or expressway and only a total of two signs will be permitted for any one “Historic Downtown”, regardless of the number of highway routes that serve the community. The access location for each direction of travel along the freeway or expressway *may* be at a different interchange or intersection. Ramp directional signs *may* be required if the motorist is expected to make a decision on the ramps.
3. The community must install confirmation signing on the selected access route(s), mutually suitable to both the Department and community, before the freeway or expressway mainline and ramp signing is installed.
4. The community must pass a resolution or similar official document which specifies the requested access location(s) for the “Historic Downtown” directional signing and **shall** submit the resolution to the Department’s Regional office as the official request.
5. The location(s) selected will remain fixed for ten years or the life of the signing before changes to the location(s) *may* be considered.
6. The community will be responsible for all costs incurred by the Department, including installation and long term maintenance of the signs, plus any confirmation signing required.
7. Freeway or expressway sign design and message will be determined by the Department in accordance with applicable standards and in the interests of uniformity. Signs **shall** be white text with brown background. Sign Message **shall** read “Historic Downtown [Name of Community]”. Pictographs **shall not** be allowed on Historic Downtown signing.
8. The physical location of the freeway or expressway signing on the approaches to the interchange(s) or intersection(s) identified by the community as the access points to the “Historic Downtown” district will be determined by the Department.
9. “Historic Downtown” signs with appropriate directional arrows will also be placed at the junction of the ramp and crossroad at the access interchange or intersection.

10. A combination of community downtown signs and “Historic Downtown” signs for the same community **shall not** be allowed.

“Historic Downtown” signing on a freeway or expressway mainline is considered supplemental signing. The approval and installation is subject to all provisions of the Department’s TGM 2-15-3, Sign Categories and Policy for Directional Signing addition to the eligibility requirements as set forth herein.